FOGGY BOTTOM HISTORIC DISTRICT CONSERVANCY
914 25th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

30 April 2004

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Re: BZA Case # 17154, Variance Request / New house proposal for 935 26th Street, NW Rear, Hughes Mews

Dear Chairman and Members of the BZA :

The Foggy Bottom Historic District Conservancy has twice reviewed and testified (by letter and in person) against the plans for the proposed new three- story house on Hughes Mews for historic preservation concerns. Now, for reasons supported by the Foggy Bottom Historic Overlay zoning, we continue to express our objections to the applicant's request for a variance from existing zoning requirements. As the careful analysis by the DC Office of Planning recommendation for the current action notes on p. 8, "No form of conforming dwelling can be built on this lot." The proposed structure is too large for its lot given the intent of the zoning overlay for the "low scale, moderate density residential neighborhood" it hopes to join. "

The proposed house is within the Foggy Bottom Overlay District and its plan should have been guided by the Overlay requirements of "...low scale residential structures forming a cohesive neighborhood of modest dwellings" and "harmony of rhythmic townhouses.", not a too large cinder block and plate glass building.

The applicant requests a variance from various lot space occupancy requirements because he is making use of too small a lot from an existing house. The intent of the neighborhood zoning overlay was to insure open space in the neighborhood. It says designs should, "preserve areas planned as open backyard and alleyways ...to protect light, air and the privacy they provide." The proposed house does not meet this intent.

A new home was added to Hughes Mews a few years ago which was constructed to exist within the prevailing overlay zoning height limit and the existing lot open space requirements with no problems to the owner. There is no reason for the current applicant to receive a lot occupancy variance request.

We can find no support for forcing a charmless cinder block needle structure on too tiny a lot into a part of Foggy Bottom where the size relation of one structure to another is so important and part of the heart of the intent of the Overlay zoning. It should be pointed out that the ANC - 2A decision was unanimous only because Maria Tyler, the representative for the single member district in which the applicant hopes to build the house, was absent due to illness. She opposes it as it violates the very intent of the zoning regulations. We sincerely request the BZA to reject the applicant's request for a variance from zoning regulations.

Thank you for your consideration.
Respectfully submitted.

Sincerely yours,
Thomas W. Bower
Thomas W. Bower
President, FBHDC

BZA
Case No. 17154
Exhibit No. 33

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17154
EXHIBIT NO. 33

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914 25th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

3 May 2004

Via FAX of 2 pages including this cover.

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